

CPC Meeting – December 10, 2014

7:30 pm

The Kingsbury Room, Wellesley Police Station

The Wellesley Community Preservation Committee met at 7:30 pm in the Kingsbury Room of the Wellesley Police Station.

Present were the following CPC members: Barbara McMahon (Chair), Allan Port (Vice Chair), Deb Carpenter, Jim Conlin, Kathy Egan, Joan Gaughan, Susan Hurwitz, Tad Heuer .

CPC Assistant Nicole Ng was also present. Mason Smith of Advisory arrived later.

CPC Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Citizen Speak

No citizens were present to speak.

Natural Resources Commission (NRC)

Members present: Brandon Schmitt, Director, Steve Murphy, Vice Chair, Heidi Gross, Chair

Handouts: 3 short applications and report

1. Comprehensive Pond Management Plan

Funds are requested for a study to evaluate the current state of all the ponds in town. Then, a priority list will be generated to plan necessary interventions, such as dredging, to preserve the ponds and prevent them from turning into swamps. Once a pond becomes wetland, it cannot be dredged and reversed back to pond. Abbott and Duck Ponds are possible top priorities. The main goal is to come up with a long term maintenance plan.

Susan Hurwitz questioned the effectiveness of these pond maintenance plans. About 10 years ago Rockridge was dredged but now is filled in.

NRC team responded that Rockridge is a water detention pond that was dredged only to 4 years at that time. It should have been deeper because it is now not moving storm water out. Storm water drainage is monitored by the DPW and only involves culverts, not ponds. Culverts are very burdened and we need to look at the current state of the ponds.

Requests for funds from the town have been repeatedly postponed for the last 6 years but the ponds really need to be studied now. Hopefully, the study will show that not all ponds will need dredging. Study will also provide baseline for a preservation plan.

Allan Port asked whether continual maintenance will be by DPW or NRC.

Mr. Murphy replied by NRC but the baseline study will show how involved DPW would be.

CPC members raised the possibility of the State providing some funding since the ponds could be considered part of the Charles River Watershed.

NRC members responded that State only maintains ponds with springs (Quabbin) but have given funds in the past to dredge as part of storm management.

Mr. Heuer asked how long do these plans last. Why not dredge all ponds and ask State for money?

NRC members explained that with proper maintenance the ponds might just need smaller updates in 10 years. A lot depends on cultural changes, like the banning of phosphorus, technical guidelines to mitigate problems and also on the state of the ponds. Again, we need to know the baseline before coming up with a maintenance plan. The study will also show the State that we have done the homework before they will consider dredging funds.

Ms. Carpenter would like the study to not only show the state of the ponds but also how they will be maintained, so, in 10 years, more funds will not be requested again for this purpose.

2. Morse Pond Shore Erosion Study

Certain areas of the Morse Pond Shore are badly eroded and not as accessible. Exposed roots of trees will fail and recreational picnic areas are at risk. Artificial water channels and erosions from informal boat launches have also added to the erosion. NRC is asking for CPA funds to study the shoreline to create an action plan to preserve it.

3. Kelly Field Tennis Courts Study

Lastly, Mr. Schmitt presented the request for funds to either repair the Kelly Field tennis courts or use the land for something else. The courts are located behind Bates School and are not really visible or accessible. The surface is bumpy and broken.

Discussion ensued around keeping the courts for tennis or using the land for playing fields, basketball court, pocket park, community gardens, as well as which committees will decide final use, maintain and pay the costs.

Mr. Port asked if Town will be responsible for maintenance and whether NRC has requested capital from Town.

NRC members responded that it has but request was cut repeatedly due to higher town priorities.

Ms. Carpenter suggested deferring decisions until after North 40, which could affect assessments town wide.

Mr. Murphy said that North 40 might affect funding for ponds but not the tennis courts. Ms. Gross suggested that residents be polled about the tennis courts as a neighborhood amenity.

Fuller Brook Park Rehabilitation Project Update

Member present: Diane Campbell, Chair of the Fuller Brook Park Coordinating Committee

Diane Campbell gave an update on the Fuller Brook Park Rehabilitation Project. Phase 1 of the project is moving forward after a brief stall over the summer due to issues of scope, schedule, and change of Project Manager (PM). After starting, original PM felt the demands and specifics of the project were too much. Peter Jackson, who has worked for the town before, was then hired as the new PM.

At the Annual Town Meeting, a motion was approved to create a smaller committee to monitor the construction phase. The committee consists of 5 member volunteers with staff.

Since early September, considerable work has been done. The smaller committee meets regularly with construction and town to keep everyone informed. Anyone interested can subscribe to the newsletter on the Fuller Brook page on the town website. PM posts regular updates with photos and progress. Website is manned everyday and questions are dealt by staff and Ms. Campbell.

In the spring, the Fuller Brook committee applied for a \$319k grant for water improvements from the town. It's pending approval for specific and future works. More details to come. Reduced price and CPA money will be reallocated to other needs -- \$100k for 3 years.

Discussion ensued about the new path near Caroline and Abbott which seems very grey and asphalt-y. Reassurance was made that the material is stone dust, not asphalt, and will weather lighter in a few years.

Ms. Gross added that the soil dredged from the brook will not be taken offsite. It's not toxic and would make great topsoil for filling of paths and as garden soil. So, site will de-water dredged soil naturally.

North 40 Update

Mr. Port gave a quick update on the North 40 Project. No decision has been made yet but will be soon. Mr. Port will send CPC members the presentation from the Trustees with timetable for their next meeting.

Playing Fields Task Force (PFTF)

Members present: Tripp Sheehan, Chair, Andy Wrobel, Recreation Commissioner, Patti Quigley, School Committee Chair.

Handouts: Application and Athletic Fields Needs Analysis

Ms. Quigley presented the application for the track and field upgrade at the High School. The finding from the athletic fields needs analysis shows that the #1 priority is the track and field area. The track course needs to be resurfaced and the field space could be more efficiently utilized by replacing it with synthetic turf.

The PFTF team explained that the demands for rectangular fields have increased greatly as more young residents of the town are participating in more sports, earlier on. Turning the grass field at the High School (HS) into turf would increase field space not just for HS athletics but the entire town. A new turf field at the HS would decrease traffic to Sprague as currently HS travels to Sprague after school for practice and games. It would also free Sprague up for other uses, reducing the need to rent out third-party fields, such as Elm Bank.

Ms. Gaughan asked about the injury rate of turf vs. grass and the toxicity of the material in turf.

PFTF pointed to Sprague which was replaced by turf in 2008. Ankle injuries fell by 25%, and muscle strains were also reduced. Turf field drains 4 hours after rain and is not slippery. Newer and better pellet was used in the turf. It cost 400 -500k more for the non rubber turf vs. the toxic crumb rubber for Sprague but it's worth it. They will look into whether upper body injuries in soccer are worse on turf compared to grass.

Ms. Carpenter asked how the track and field project will roll into stadium project.

PFTF explained that the current design is in the same footprint. Conduits will be installed underground in case electricity will be added. Track and field upgrade is phase 1 because all the other stadium pieces (locker rooms, concessions, seating, etc.) will take more money and time.

Mr. Port asked why the project is not funded by school capital. Mr. Wrobel clarified that schools use the field but do not own the land. Land is under jurisdiction of NRC. High school athletics have first priority on field use after school but the field is available to the whole town for various sports in different orders of priority.

Mr. Heuer also questioned why school pays the least but has the most priority. Mr. Wrobel responded that historically school does not pay for field upgrades as was the case of Sprague and Brown.

Mr. Port raised concerns about whether CPA funds should be and could be legally used for this project. CPA funds are banned for use to build enclosed structures. He is concerned

that future phases of the stadium project will include such structures and open the CPC up for legal action.

Discussion ensued about whether other sources of funding have been sought, such as from the town, school, state, private donors, etc. PFTF hopes the CPA funds will drive funding from the other sources. It's not eligible for grants from the State. Task Force feels that there are probably even more aspects of the project that CPA funds could support but has been conservative in its request.

Mr. Port would like assurance on what the final stadium phase would include. He considers replacing the track as maintenance and is not sure if the project fits CPA fund parameters. He asked if there are other items that are more clearly in line.

PFTF explained that the track and field is the first priority and would have a most immediate impact. Work can start in May and be done in August for use. They will look into taking out the track resurfacing and replacing it with something more clearly applicable for CPA funds.

Ms. McMahon reiterated that CPC members need to further discuss the PFTF application. She assured the Task Force that they will be invited back after members have discussed more in detail, possibly in Jan or Feb.

Discussion of Historical Society Request

CPC will vote in January on the request and whether they need Ms. Fahey to come back for more information.

Approval of Minutes:

November 12, 2014

September 25, 2014

There are minor changes to be made but the approval of both sets of minutes is tabled until the next meeting in January.

Invoices:

\$25.38 for an ad in the Townsman

\$19.48 from HR

Approval for both invoices was moved by Mr. Port and seconded by Ms. Carpenter. The vote was unanimous.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:55pm with a motion to adjourn by Mr. Port and seconded by Ms. Carpenter. The vote was unanimous.